



General Assembly

February Session, 2016

Raised Bill No. 5383

LCO No. 1784



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE FARM VIABILITY MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM AND THE CONNECTICUT FARM LINK PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 22-26j of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 The Department of Agriculture shall establish and administer a
4 farm viability matching grant program to any agricultural not-for-
5 profit organization, municipality, group of municipalities, regional
6 council of governments organized under the provisions of sections 4-
7 124i to 4-124p, inclusive, or group of municipalities that have
8 established a regional interlocal agreement pursuant to sections 7-339a
9 to 7-339l, inclusive, to further agricultural viability. Such grants may be
10 used for the following purposes: (1) Local capital projects that foster
11 agricultural viability, including, but not limited to, processing facilities
12 and farmers' markets; (2) the development and implementation of
13 agriculturally-friendly land use regulations and local farmland
14 protection strategies that sustain and promote local agriculture; [and]
15 (3) the development of new marketing programs and venues through

16 or in which a majority of products sold are grown in the state; and (4)
17 the development and implementation of programs and services that
18 promote farm and farmland access and transfer of such farms.

19 Sec. 2. Section 22-26*l* of the 2016 supplement to the general statutes
20 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
21 *from passage*):

22 (a) The Department of Agriculture shall establish and administer a
23 Connecticut Farm Link program to establish a database of farmers and
24 agricultural land owners who intend to sell, lease or otherwise transfer
25 their farm operations or agricultural land. The database shall be
26 maintained by the Department of Agriculture and shall be made
27 available to the public on the department's web site. Persons interested
28 in starting an agricultural business or persons interested in expanding
29 a current agricultural business may notify the department and have
30 their names, contact information and intentions regarding such
31 businesses [placed on the web site] entered in such database. The
32 department shall make reasonable efforts to facilitate contact between
33 parties with [similar] compatible interests, including, but not limited
34 to, growing and processing crops as feedstock for biodiesel heating
35 and transportation fuels. The Department of Agriculture may
36 collaborate with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, The University of
37 Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service and the Labor Department
38 to encourage and assist veterans in starting or expanding an
39 agricultural business and to provide education and training
40 opportunities to veterans concerning farming or agricultural
41 operations.

42 (b) The Department of Agriculture shall post [educational] materials
43 regarding the Connecticut Farm Link program [on the department's
44 web site] and farmland access, restoration and transfer on the
45 department's Internet web site, conduct outreach to landowners and
46 farmers, perform on-site investigations for lands enrolled in the Farm
47 Link program, facilitate contact between parties with compatible

48 interests and provide related educational programming, including, but
49 not limited to, [information] programs regarding farm transfer and
50 farm succession planning, family farm estate planning, farm transfer
51 strategies, farm leasing, formation of farm partnerships, growing and
52 processing crops as feedstock for biodiesel heating and transportation
53 fuels and information regarding starting a farm business.

54 (c) The department may create partnerships or utilize third-party
55 entities to implement the provisions of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	22-26j
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	22-26l

Statement of Purpose:

To facilitate and augment the Department of Agriculture's farm viability matching grant program and the Connecticut Farm Link Program.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]